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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000158

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA WELCOMES ADDITIONAL US TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN, EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT CIV-MIL COORDINATION

REF: A. STATE 15623

[B.](#) STATE 18868

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[¶](#)1. (C'/NF) Summary: Ottawa-based Canadian officials responded positively to potential changes to the U.S. force posture in Afghanistan, but repeated long-standing concerns about command and control issues related to multi-mission integration in NATO-ISAF's Regional Command - South. Canada will raise these concerns at various upcoming meetings, and are hoping U.S. officials will respond to them, as well as issues related to the development and deployment of Afghan National Army battalions, with detailed proposals. Engaging and satisfying Canadian concerns where possible now could help to set a positive tone in advance of any subsequent effort to convince Ottawa to retain at least some of its military capability in Afghanistan after the end of its Parliamentary-mandated combat troop pull-out in 2011. Defence Minister Mackay's March 5 meeting with DefSec Gates and other U.S. officials will provide a timely opportunity to review our thinking and to address remaining Canadian concerns well in advance of the NATO Summit in April. End summary.

[¶](#)2. (C/NF) Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Afghanistan Task Force Senior Adviser David Fairchild (protect) on March 2 described ref a and b points on Afghanistan as "overall good news" for Canada. He commented that Canadian officials harbor strong reservations about the "public protection pilot" in Wardak, but have their hands full facing the situation in Kandahar Province, and so will not press their viewpoint at this time. Fairchild underscored that, at various meetings over the next two months, Canadian officials will ask U.S. counterparts to share their thinking and planning in three key areas: building and operating allied military and civilian command and control (C2) architectures for the NATO-ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) missions, and their "meshing" in Regional Command - South (RC-S); how to avoid the burnout of Afghan National Army (ANA) battalions in high-intensity locales such as RC-S; and, how to ensure that ANA battalions deploy where they are needed the most.

Command and Control

[¶](#)3. (C) On C2 architecture, Fairchild noted that the issue will become additionally important as the U.S. surges even more OEF and ISAF capability, as well as more State and USAID personnel, into Kandahar. He commented that the U.S.

military's C2 is relatively uncomplicated, but claimed that the U.S. C2 intent with regard to civ-mil and bilateral mil-to-mil/civ-mil command and control relationships across the OEF and ISAF missions and PRT elements remains a "black hole" to Canada and other allies. This black hole, he said, is causing "a great deal of concern in Ottawa and down range."

Kandak Burnout

¶4. (C) Fairchild said that each of Canada's five Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLTs) mentors a separate ANA kandak (600 member battalion) from the ANA's 205 Corps. Specifically, Canadian OMLTs support three infantry kandaks, one combat support kandak, and one combat service support kandak, and one combat support kandak, and one combat service support kandak, and also provide advisers to the 205 Corps headquarters. The kandaks in RC-S are doing "reasonably well," he opined, but the already high tempo of operations is taking a toll on their readiness and morale. The welcome addition of U.S. forces in theater, and the expected demands for an increase in operational tempo for the existing kandaks, nonetheless risk exacerbating kandak "burnout" without the deployment of additional ANA battalions to RC-S, he predicted. According to Fairchild, Canadian officials and operators had been dispirited by the recent "ridiculous" decision to deploy Afghan forces to the north alongside German forces rather than to the south or the east, where the need was so much greater.

Comment

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¶5. (C/NF) While Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other senior officials have insisted that the combat role in Afghanistan will end in 2011 as mandated by a March 2008 House of Commons motion, the possibility remains that this or a subsequent government could decide to make available some Canadian troops after that date for other functions, such as training and the provision of combat enablers. Placating Canadian concerns as quickly as possible that the welcome addition of more U.S. troops for ISAF and OEF in Kandahar will not overwhelm a "carefully calibrated" civ-mil balance and kandak development there could help set the stage for such an eventual policy decision. Canada also wants to see a robust, fully integrated civ-mil C2 and diplomatic and aid structures in RC-S and to ensure Canada-U.S. unity of effort. Defence Minister Mackay's March 5 meeting with DefSec Gates and other U.S. officials will provide a timely opportunity to review our thinking and to address remaining Canadian concerns well in advance of the NATO Summit in April.

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